

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 /069 W  
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R 291537Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8806  
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14315

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: EG  
SUBJ: THE WAFD: CENTER STRIKES BACK

SUMMARY. CENTER PARTY REPORTEDLY PRESSURING MP'S AGAINST  
JOINING NEW WAFD. SARAG AL-DIN SAID LACK REQUISITE NUMBER  
FOUDN PARTY. PRESS LAW IN LIMBO. PM ALIM SAID TO USE MAJORITY  
TO STIFLE OPPOSITION. EDITORIALISTS ATTACK WAFD. END SUMMARY

1. SPEAKING TO EMBOFF AUG 29, INDEPENDENT MP MUHAMMAD HELMI  
MURAD SAID PM SALIM'S CENTER PARTY HAS MOVED TO PRECLUDE  
LEGALIZATIN OF NEW WAFD. HE NOTED THAT POLITICAL PARTY LAW  
REQUIRES NEW PARTIES (BUT NOT EXISTING THREE GROUPS) TO HAVE  
20 MP'S AMONG FOUNDING MEMBERS. SARAG AL-DIN HAD RECRUITED  
MORE THAN THE REQUIRED NUMBER BUT, ACCORDING MURAD, THEY ARE  
WITH HIM NO MORE.

2. MURAD CLAIMED CENTER PARTY LEADERS TOLD MP'S LEANING TO-  
WARDS WAFD, THAT IF THEY ASSISTED IN FOUNDING PARTY, LEGALITY  
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OF THEIR ELECTIONS TO PA WOULD BE CHALLENGED. WITH CENTER PARTY  
ENJOYING LAGE MAJORITY IN ASSEMBLY, MURAD SAID THREAT COULD  
BE CARRIED OUT EASILY.

3. ADDITIONALLY, MURAD CLAIMED MOTIVATION BEHIND LIFTING OF  
P AHMAD YUNI'S PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY  
DUE TO HIS ASSOCIATION WITH SARAG AL-DIN. (OVERT EXPLANATION

FOR THIS ACT WAS YUNIS'S QUESTIONABLE HANDLING OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE SOCIETY FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS.") YUNIS, ACCORDING TO MURAD, WAS ONE OF SARAG AL-DIN'S FIRST RECRUITS.

4. MURAD SAID CENTER PARTY'S CAMPAIGN HAS HAD EFFECT, AND HE ESTIMATED THAT ONLY 9-16 MEMBERS CURRENTLY WILLING RISK CONFRONTATION WITH PM. HE DID NOT THINK SARAG AL-DIN WOULD BE ABLE RECRUIT ENOUGH ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO FORM PARTY IN NEAR FUTURE, DESPITE FACT NEW WAFD HAS SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT WITHIN PA.

5. ON PRESS LAW, MURAD NOTED THIS HAS NOT BEEN REFERRED TO ASSEMBLY BY MIN OF INFO AND IT QUESTIONABLE WHETHER IT REMAINS POSSIBLE PASS THIS LEGISLATION DURING CURRENT SESSION, WHICH ENDS SEP 30. UNTIL LAW PASSED, HE AGREED, THERE LITTLE SENSE IN FORMING POLITICAL PARTY.

6. MURAD ARGUED THAT EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY SALIM, DOES NOT WANT EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION (ALTHOUGH THEY SUPPORT THIS IN PRICIPLE). HE CITED CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON ACTIVITIES INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO DEMONSTRATE THIS, NOTING PARTICULARLY NEW PRESS LAW WILL NOT PERMIT INDEPENDENT MP'S ESTABLISH OWN JOURNAL. SALIM, HE MAINTAINED, HAS USED MASSIVE MAJORITY IN ASSEMBLY TO STIFLE DEBATE AND LIMIT MP'S ABILITY OVERSEE WORKINGS OF GOVT.

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7. AKHBA CHAIRMAN MOUSA SABRI'S AUG 23 ATTACK ON SARAG AL-DIN PROBABLY INDICATIVE OF GOVT'S INTENT KEEP NEW WAFD OUT OF POLITICS. SABRI SUPPORTED CONCEPT OF ADDITIONAL PARTIES BUT REGRETED ONLY INDIVIDUAL MOVING TO ESTABLISH ONE IS "A PYGMY, A NAUSEATING AND CONTEMPABLE ONE." SABRI CLAIMED SARAG AL-DIN'S REEMERGENCE RECALLS: EGYPTIAN HUMILITATION PRIOR 1952 REVOLUTION; RULE OF ARISTOCRACY AND FEUDALISTS; FAWNING ON KING; AND SUBSERVIENCE TO BRITISH. DEMOCRACY, SAID SABRI, WILL NOT ALLOW THIS PASHA'S RETURN. AHRAM, TOO, EDITORIALIZED AGAINST WAFD'S RETURN, BUT LESS VENOMOUSLY.

8. ONLY COMMENTARY THUS FAR FAVORABLE TO SARAG AL-DIN WAS CONTAINED IN AUG 27 AKHBAR AL YOM COLUMN BY MAVERICK MOUSTAFA AMIN. AMIN DID NOT PRIASE SARAG AL-DIN BUT RATHER THE REFORMATION OF EGYPTIAN SOCIETY WHICH ALLOWED FORMER WAFD MIN ATTACK PM PUBLICLY WITHOUT SUFFERING DIRE CONSEQUENCES.

9. COMMENT: MURAD'S STATEMENTS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT INDICATE GOVT WILL MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR SARAG AL-DIN TO OBTAIN LEGAL SANCTION FOR REVIVED WAFD. EILTS

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## Message Attributes

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